How smartphones affect Raffles Instution Year 1 students’ privacy

Smartphones have become the gadget of the century. Since Apple brought the smartphone to the mass consumer market in 2007, the sale of smartphones has risen significantly, and as of December 2010, 31% of US phone owners are smartphone owners (Brownlow, 2011). So what exactly is this smartphone that is dominating the market? A smartphone is a touchscreen phone capable of functions that normal phones would not be able to achieve. Such functions include social networking, internet, gaming, and thousands of other applications that you can download. With all these unique functions for only a few hundred more dollars, there is every reason to believe that thousands of smartphones are being bought daily. What has this got to do with privacy? Privacy has been known to be one of the most important factors in social life. Without privacy there Man would not be able to rest after long days, no comfort in themselves, only things everyone already knows about. There are things that people would want to hide, and there’s nothing wrong about that. Although it may seem that privacy is no longer existent, there is no doubt that it remains still key in our lives, silent and role-playing. Therefore, with smartphones rising in sales rapidly in the present days, it is important to link these two topics together, discuss and research.

Framing your research topic

1. A main problem for smartphone users is having to run the risk of having partly or completely no privacy. Already it is known that there are cookies. Computer cookies. These “stalkers” will continuously track every site a user visits, so that when the information is needed, it can be easily obtained. These cookies are the pioneers in everyday computer tracking, and now that portable devices such as the smartphone emerges as top in the markets, there are no doubts that other forms of ‘cookies’ will be created to track online phone usage. The phone, whether a smartphone or just a normal phone, has definitely less security potential when compared to a computer. Although this also means that the tracking of the phone is limited, it means that security programs, like the ones on the computer, can no longer be used on the phone. That is one of the reasons for the lack of privacy on the phone. Also, it is observed that much of the smartphone is revolved around the internet. This means a sharp increase in the chance of a smartphone being hacked or altered. This internet, although bringing much more gain than harm, is the real core of insecurity of smartphones. Also there are motivations. Parents, who want to check on their childrens’ locations and what they are doing, can use applications downloaded from the ‘market’ to track their locations. Bosses, who want to know what their employees are doing, can also do the same. This strongly encourages the application makers to make more tracking applications. Although these may not be dangerous in terms of intruding privacy yet, it still holds a considerable risk of being modified into becoming apps containing viruses.

Reasons for choice of topic

1. I chose this topic mainly because of three reasons. The first reason of why I chose this topic is because I wanted to be an independent thinker, free from the bonds of the monotonous thought-patterns of everyday use. I wanted a topic that was new, and not something everyone else was doing. Secondly, I believe that in today’s society, privacy is an important part of our lives, and I was shocked to discover that our smartphones can leave us open to intrusion by outside parties. Therefore, I was motivated to work on this topic, to research and find new ways, or new problems, so that this rising issue shall be made known to the members of the public. Lastly, due to the recent scam my aunt fell into, losing a few hundred dollars via her smartphone, I was further inspired to prevent such events from happening again. Although I was first angered by this, I came to my senses that these incidents will be threatening the society, and since prevention is better than cure, I decided to make use of this coincidental topic to perhaps set a base for future solutions

Feasibility of the project

1. Definitely. Now that smartphones are getting more and more prevalent, it is essential to find new solutions to this concern sooner or later. As the smartphone gets more and more popular, the privacy of users becomes less and less secure. So we need to nip this problem in the butt before it develops into an international crisis. This project will be able to conduct in depth research on the problems, the causes and the consequences, and even if this security issue for smartphones does not show up in the future, we would at least have a backup.
2. Yes. Since smartphone users are commonly found everywhere nowadays, it will be extremely convenient to conduct a research on them. Also, various models of smartphones’ statistics can now be found, including their developers, including some like apple and android.

Manageability of the project

1. I anticipate many difficulties. Although this project has a high chance of success, there will most likely be many difficulties. Such problems will most likely root from lack of the ability for the group to communicate and meet up. Although many will be unpredictable, some , like confusion internally within the group, will probably surface. Other than these local problems, researching may also be a pain in the neck. Although the fact Is that the security and privacy of the smartphone is restricted, there will not be many who fall into scams, as of now at least. The amount of people we can find who have experienced security failures of the smartphone may not be what we originally wanted, which will prove to be a potential problem. To face these problems, our group will have to resort to means such as chatting on the net late in the night, so that all of us will be clear on our objectives and individual tasks. To solve the problem of lack of information, we may also need to extend our data pool to not only just people who have personally experienced it, but maybe also documents or articles. Although the project will not be an easy task, I feel that as long as our group sticks together and thinks fast, we will be able to overcome these obstacles.

Accessibility of the information required

1. Our information will mostly come from primary sources, although we may have to resort to secondary sources. Primary sources are the preferred choice, but as mentioned previously, they may not be too easy to obtain. Therefore some secondary sources will have to be implemented into the work, and besides it is necessary to use both primary and secondary sources, just so to balance them.

References

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smartphone>

<http://www.email-marketing-reports.com/wireless-mobile/smartphone-statistics.htm>